

*State Park*

# **Environmental Assessment**

## **Makoshika State Park Group Use Shelter**

**March 25, 2002**

*Dawson*

## MEPA / NEPA / HB495 CHECKLIST

### **PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

1. **Type of Proposed Action:** Park Capital Improvement

The improvement proposed herein for Makoshika State Park is a roofed group use shelter for the group use area located 0.7 miles from the park entrance and visitor center.

2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has the authority to provide development for public recreation on Department lands (23-1-102 MCA).

3. **Name of Project:** Makoshika Group Use Shelter

4. **Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
1420 East Sixth Avenue  
PO Box 200701  
Helena, Montana 59620-0701  
(406) 444-3750

Makoshika State Park  
1301 Snyder Avenue  
PO Box 1242  
Glendive, Montana 59330-1242  
(406) 365-6256

5. **If Applicable:**

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: April 2002

Estimated Completion Date: September 2002

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 30%

6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, township and range):**

Dawson County; SW ¼, Sec 1, T15N, R55E

**Legal description(s):**

SW ¼, Sec 1, T15N, R55E of Dawson County, Montana

**Total Acres affected:** < 2.00

**7. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

- (a) Developed:
  - residential.....0.00 acres
  - industrial.....0.00 acres
- (b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation.....<2.00 acres
- (c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas.....0.00 acres
- (d) Floodplain.....0.00 acres
- (e) Productive:
  - irrigated cropland.....0.00 acres
  - dry cropland.....0.00 acres
  - forestry.....0.00 acres
  - rangeland.....0.00 acres
  - other.....0.00 acres

**8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.**

See Map Attachment

**9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.**

Specifically, an eighteen hundred square foot roofed shelter will be erected on a concrete pad within the existing group use area. Electrical service will be extended to the structure, the parking lot will be paved and sidewalks will be constructed to connect the parking lot, the shelter and the existing vault latrine. All facilities in the site will be ADA compliant.

The proposed project is intended to improve the diversity of use of the existing group use area. Internal surveys of visitor preferences show a preference for access to developed areas within the park. Developed areas increase the diversity of use of a site, provide visitors with protection from weather and concentrate group activity-based recreation in safe, defined areas.

**10. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

(a) Permits:

Agency Name Permit Date Filed/#

N/A

(b) Funding:

Agency Name Funding Amount

N/A

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name Type of Responsibility

Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Architecture & Design Bureau Project design and construction  
Dawson County Sanitarian Public health codes

**11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Wildlife & Parks Divisions  
State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO)

## PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
< a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X		Yes	1a
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		Yes	1b
< c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 1a. The site is located on a sandy, alluvial terrace. Work below surface soil horizons will be minimal and is mainly associated with the shelter foundation. Most soil disturbance will be contained to the upper two soil horizons. Post-construction reclamation will address instability resulting from the proposed site development.
- 1b. Much of the work (paving and landscaping) will occur in areas already impacted from previous site developments. Proposed work will require removal, movement, and replacement of approximately 75 cubic yards of surface soil. The design and construction methods employed will reduce long-term impacts and post-construction site reclamation, including native seeding and landscaping, will mitigate short-term impacts. Inspection and maintenance programs will be effected to address changes in long-term erosion and drainage patterns.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- αα Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. <u>AIR</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
< a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		Yes	2b
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. <del>For P-R/D-L projects</del> , will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regulations? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 2b. Normal odors associated with the use of vault toilets may cause objectionable odors depending on circumstances such as temperature, wind, humidity, use patterns, pumping and cleaning schedules and deodorant/microbial additives used. A vault toilet is currently installed at the site and is monitored and maintained to control odors.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
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### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. <u>WATER</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
< a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		Yes	3a
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. <del>For P-R/D-I</del> , will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. <del>For P-R/D-I</del> , will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 3b. The drainage characteristics of the site will not significantly change. Paving of the parking lot will remove or direct runoff faster than the current unpaved condition, but will not result in the removal or redirection of any additional water from the site, nor in a manner inconsistent with current drainage patterns.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
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## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		Yes	4a
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X		Yes	4b
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4c
f. <del>For P-R/D-L</del> , will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 4a. Development of park facilities and infrastructure will lessen plant productivity and abundance in the immediate areas under and surrounding the development. Plant diversity will not be affected. Post-construction landscaping and revegetation will increase net plant abundance around the shelter and the group use area in general.
- 4b. Post-construction landscaping and revegetation around all developments will incorporate native plant species present in the park and will assist in promoting plant health and diversity by way of erosion abatement, nutrient retention and production of beneficial soil organics.
- 4c. As construction commences, soils will be opened allowing introduction of unwanted weed species. Landscaping, revegetation and weed control efforts will eliminate the establishment or spread of noxious weeds. FWP has also increased its efforts to control noxious weeds and these additional controls will apply to the construction/development area.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- 2 Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- 22 Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.



## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of non-game species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X			5g
h. <del>For P-R/D-I</del> , will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				
i. <del>For P-R/D-I</del> , will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 5g. A small increase in disturbance of wildlife movements will be observed. Disturbance is mainly associated with the crepuscular movement of mule deer from the benches above the site to lower areas in Cains Coulee. Previous site developments at the site have shown no extensive long-term impacts on the movement or health of wildlife and initial disturbance levels will decrease as wildlife movement adjusts to long-term human use patterns at the site.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- αα Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		No	6a
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 6a. The development of the group use area to include a shelter will increase and diversify the use type of the facility. Specifically, the shelter will be available for the public to use for large group gatherings such as weddings and reunions. These types of activities may include noise levels that exceed levels currently experienced at the site. Noise levels and other site impacts associated with the expanded use of the site will be monitored and addressed in the park's approach towards management of the site. Noise levels will not exceed levels determined to be disruptive or a nuisance. Additionally, containment of noise associated with human use of developed recreational areas to defined development areas within the park is consistent with the park's long-range management plan.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- αα Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. <u>LAND USE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicts with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				7b
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7b. The Proposed Action compliments the land use directives for Montana State Parks.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- αα Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X			8c
d. <del>For P-R/D-I</del> , will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 8c. The site is currently used for group use activities; hazards associated with current uses of the site have been addressed. Additional hazards or exposure to hazards as a result of the proposed work include a minor increase in potential for misuse or injury resulting from misuse of the group use shelter. Structural design of the shelter takes into consideration and minimizes potential misuse and/or injury from misuse associated with persons attempting to climb the structure or engage in activities for which the structure was not intended. Increases in the levels and types of hazards that are typically expected from providing developed structures and defined areas of congregation will be addressed in the long-term management of the site, with respect to levels of monitoring and enforcement consistent with the level of development proposed.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- αα Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X		Yes	9e
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 9e. Group use improvements will result in minor increases in visitation to the park. The existing infrastructure and operations plans can accommodate any anticipated increase in traffic and traffic hazards associated with facilities improvements at the group use area.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- αα Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: _____		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?			X			10c
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X			10d
< e. Define projected revenue sources						10e
< f. Define projected maintenance costs.						10f
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 10c. Electrical service to the group use shelter will be buried; an aboveground junction box will be located at the structure.
- 10d. Use of the group use shelter will cause only a minor increase in electrical consumption. Electrical consumption will be limited to use by groups having reserved and paid to use the site and costs associated with increased electrical consumption will be offset by revenue gained from projected use fees charged to the site users.
- 10e. Revenue and maintenance funds are via park user fees, accommodations tax, coal and fuel taxes, general fund and special recreation fees associated with reserved use of the site.
- 10f. Projected maintenance costs include additional site cleaning and trash removal. Maintenance cost savings associated with improving the surface of the parking area should offset some maintenance cost increases associated with increased use of the site. Additionally, a perpetual financial commitment by the Glendive Kiwanis Club is earmarked for maintenance and upkeep of the facility.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
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## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. <b>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
<c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X		Yes	11c
d. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. The proposed site improvement will diversify and improve recreational opportunities for Makoshika's visitors.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
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- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- αα Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
<a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?			X			12a
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , will the project affect historic or cultural resources? <b>Attach SHPO letter of clearance.</b> (Also see 12.a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 12a. The site received State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) clearance for surface disturbance on September 11, 1999. Project work is binding and satisfies the directives of the agreement.

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- αα Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.



## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT <sup>3</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>3</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>3</sup>	None	Minor <sup>3</sup>	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources, which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. <del>For P-R/D-J</del> , list any federal or state permits required.		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- 3 Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- < Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- α Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- αα Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider, and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

**No Action:** This alternative involves no action by FWP; i.e., the State would not develop the group use area to include a shelter. The state legislature and FWP's parks division have made a commitment to eastern Montana and Makoshika State Park with respect to increased development and recreational opportunities. No development will leave Makoshika with underdeveloped visitor facilities and an aesthetically unimpressive group use area. Local, state and out-of-state visitors have expressed a need for improvements to Makoshika's infrastructure within developed recreational areas while leaving other areas primitive and less accessible, which this development program accomplishes.

**Reduced Project Scope:** Following are circumstances if specific project components are eliminated:

Shelter construction: No shelter would exist in the group use area. The area would continue to be underdeveloped and underutilized. The site is currently an exposed plain with no available shade, water or recreational facilities other than a vault toilet.

Paved parking area: The gravel parking area would remain with inherent dust and rough/washboarded and/or slippery-when-wet conditions. Dusty conditions discourage groups from reserving the site for special events.

Electrical service: Electrical service would not be installed in the group use area. Use diversity of the site diminishes.

Connecting paths between facilities: The site is more difficult and less enjoyable to use. Site would not be ADA compliant. Increased maintenance costs and degradation to landscaping would occur as people establish pathways to the amenities in the grassy areas of the site.

**Proposed Project:** With the proposed project, an 1,800 square foot group use shelter will be erected at the group use area. Electrical service will be extended to the facility, the parking lot will be paved and sidewalks will be established to connect the parking lot, the shelter and the existing vault toilet. Post-development reclamation in the form of revegetation and noxious weed control measures will be effected to mitigate site disturbance associated with the development. Maintenance and impact assessment plans will be initiated to minimize and control long-term use patterns and impacts.

The development will satisfy the public's expressed desire for developed recreational sites within the developed corridor of the park and satisfies the department's desire to provide developed recreational sites consistent with land use directives. The shelter will provide a safe, enjoyable and aesthetically pleasing facility with which to conduct group use activities and will provide users with protection from wind, rain and sunshine. Further, the shelter will provide amenities necessary to engage in functions that require such amenities, such as weddings, reunions and special events.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

N/A

4. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? No

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An EIS is not required. There will be no significant impacts to the natural or human environment. Most improvements described herein, outside of installation of the shelter itself, are upgrades or replacements of existing facilities which are old, outdated and expensive to maintain. An EA is sufficient for the analysis of impacts of the proposed action.

5. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The notice of this assessment will be published in the Ranger Review and Helena Independent Record and the statewide electronic bulletin board.

A thirty-day comment period provides involvement by written comment. The Friends of Makoshika, a community-based park support group and the primary contributor of grant-based funding for the project, will be involved in all phases of the proposed project, from conceptualization to post-construction analysis and maintenance. This level of public involvement is appropriate given the circumstances of this proposal.

6. Duration of comment period if any:

Review copies of the EA will be mailed to appropriate agencies, government officials, and nonprofit natural resource groups. The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on the environmental assessment and the proposed action and alternatives:

- ! 4 legal notices: two notices published one week apart in both these newspapers: Ranger Review and Helena Independent Record.
- ! 1 legal notice on Montana's Electronic Bulletin Board
- ! 30 day comment period following publication of second legal notice

7. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Tom Shoush	Montana State Parks
Makoshika State Park	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1301 Snyder Avenue	1420 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 1242	P.O. Box 200701
Glendive, Montana 59330-1242	Helena, Montana 59620-0701
(406) 365-6256	(406)444-3750

## PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

### Why build a group use shelter at Makoshika State Park's group use area?

The Proposed Action increases use diversity of the site and concentrates use by visitors to an established and maintainable developed area designed to accommodate concentrated use. The proposed action is being pursued within the constraints of and in compliance with MEPA, NEPA and HB495 requirements.

The community of Glendive has expressed interest in the development of improved recreational facilities at Makoshika State Park. This interest and desire is mirrored by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' desire to provide safe and aesthetically pleasing recreational sites consistent with department land use directives. Past development of recreational facilities at Makoshika, including an amphitheater in the NW ¼, Sec. 18, T15N, R56E further supports the community's and department's desire to provide recreational opportunities to visitors. Further, funding pursuits by the Friends Of Makoshika, a Glendive-based community support group of the park, have been the impetus behind the development of both the amphitheater and the proposed group use shelter.

The shelter would be constructed within a developed area of the park known as Cains Coulee; Cains Coulee is the location of other developed facilities, including a visitor center and a campground. The site is suitable with respect to its capacity for development, i.e. the physical capacity of the site to withstand the proposed modifications. The site is considered to be stable with respect to soil instability. The potential for disruption or destruction of significant geological, physical and paleontological resources is nonexistent in most areas of consideration and minor in areas that do represent such disruption, and mitigation is available and determined to be suitable to offset such disturbances. The site received State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) clearance for surface disturbance on September 11, 1999, and project work is binding and satisfies the directives of that agreement. No significant changes in air quality are expected. The characteristics of surface water discharge and/or the alteration of surface water quality will not change significantly.

As the site is currently used for group use activities, current maintenance plans can be modified to address additional or changed maintenance needs. Operations costs will increase only slightly and will be offset by a modest increase in revenue associated with current department group use fees established for the use of group use facilities. Additionally, the Glendive Kiwanis Club has pledged perpetual annual assistance associated with the upkeep of the facility. The facility is anticipated to be a permanent long-term structure.

The proposed action is expected to have a positive impact on tourism in Dawson County, where tourism is defined as the guidance and/or management of tourists. Currently few if any similar facilities exist in the county which can be rented for the purpose of group use activities. Thus, it is projected that the proposed facility will not impact, hinder or compete with similar facilities within Dawson County, nor unfairly compete with the private sector in providing such facilities to recreationists. With respect to the alteration of the quality and/or quantity of recreation and tourism opportunities and settings, the location of the facility in a Montana State Park complements the land use directives of the department and provides an integrated recreational opportunity within Dawson County, combining the availability of developed recreational facilities with access and proximity to interpretive and nature-based recreational opportunities.

March 25, 2002

To: Environmental Quality, P O Box 200901, Helena, MT 59260-0901  
Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Director's Office  
Park's Division  
Fisheries Division  
Wildlife Division  
Regional Supervisors, R-1, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7  
Legal Unit

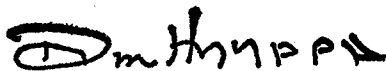
Montana Historical Society, SHPO, P O Box 201202, Helena, MT, 59620-1202  
State Library, POB 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800  
Jim Jensen, MT Environmental Info. Center, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624  
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, POB 924, Helena, MT 59624  
Bud Clinch, DNRC, POB 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601  
Montana Wildlife Federation PO Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624  
Montana Parks Association, POB 699, Billings, MT 59103  
Wayne Hirst, Montana State Parks Foundation, POB 728, Libby, MT 59923  
George Ochenski, POB 689, Helena, MT 59624  
Dawson County Commissioners, Dawson County Court House, Glendive, MT 59330

Ladies and Gentleman,

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the Makoshika Capital Improvement project proposed herein and is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until May 1, 2002. If you have any questions, feel free to contact John Little, Parks Manager, at (406) 232-0923. All comments may be sent to the undersigned.

Thank you for your interest

Sincerely,



Don Hyypa  
Regional Supervisor  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks